

November 26, 2014

Stability is key when reapplying for a visitor's visa

Q: *I recently applied for my visiting visa and was not approved. How long must I wait before I reapply?*

A: Any applicant is free to make a new application at any time, and there is no mandatory time that you must wait between visa applications. However, officers' decisions are based on U.S. immigration law and unless your circumstances have changed significantly since your last application it is likely that the next officer would reach a similar determination. You should take this under consideration before deciding to submit and pay for a new application.

Under U.S. immigration law, the burden is on the applicant to convince the consular officer that he or she will use the visa appropriately and depart the U.S. at the end of his or her intended stay. Officers consider a wide variety of factors in assessing the probability that an applicant will use his or her visa correctly and return to Jamaica, including present circumstances and past travel.

The Embassy's consular officers are highly trained interviewers. They apply the same set of standards to the adjudication of every visa application, and work hard to be consistent as a group in their application of the law. Individual officers almost always reach the same conclusion when presented with the same set of applicants. There is no "quota" of daily issuances or denials; officers are not obliged to approve *or deny* a dedicated number of visas per week, month, or year. Every qualified applicant will be approved. Each application is reviewed on its own merits.

Officers base their decisions on the facts of your personal situation. If there hasn't been a change in your circumstances between your original visa denial and your appearance for a new interview, there won't be a change in the interview's outcome. A different officer will conduct the new interview, but remember – all officers draw upon the same thorough training to reach their decisions. So, here's our strong recommendation to anyone contemplating a renewed application: Before you reapply, carefully consider how you would describe to the officer the changes that have brought your eligibility into clear light. What are the major differences in your life since the last time you applied? If you can't call to mind circumstances that make a positive difference for the officer to consider, it is not the time to reapply.

If, on the other hand, your circumstances have changed significantly – you have a more stable professional or personal situation, for example – you may be able to demonstrate that you are a qualified applicant. Let's come back to your question – how long to wait until you reapply. Each case is distinct, of course. But stability is best assessed over time. The longer your new circumstances prevail, the clearer your eligibility becomes. The officer needs to be certain that the change is a lasting change.

In some cases, new stability becomes clear in, say, six months. In other cases a year or two under the improved circumstances would be more helpful. Your question is a thoughtful one for which there is no single answer.

You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, www.kingston.usembassy.gov. Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica> and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.